

e - W O R K W I R E

THE NEWSLETTER FOR

VALLEY EXECUTIVES

Turnover a problem? Telework may be a solution

It's becoming tougher and tougher these

days to recruit and retain top-notch employees. In today's hot job market, employers are constantly looking for innovative ways to keep valuable employees from being lured away by other companies, and attract current job seekers to their organization.

One Valley company has found telework to be essential

in reaching its mission of being a 'human place to work.' Tempe-based Medtronic sets a

Medtronic because they believe in our mission and feel their needs for family and work/life

balance are being fulfilled," says Bob Enderle, Director of Human Resources.

In January's edition of *Fortune* magazine Medtronic was honored with being named one of the top employers in the U.S. Enderle insists that it's their telework program that gives them an attractive edge and

helps them accomplish their mission. He also believes it contributes to their very low



higher standard when it comes to respect for their employees. "People want to work at

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VALLEY TELEWORK PROGRESS

The Valley Telework Project (VTP) is well under way, with several organizations making progress in strides. Each company had an idea of what they wanted to achieve by participating in this project and were eager to get a formalized program off the ground. While some are dealing with space issues, others will use telework as a recruitment and retention tool. Here's a brief look at what some of these organizations want to get out of a telework program.

Information Network Corporation (INC), an Application Service Provider that provides services to government managed care organizations nationwide, will use its telework program as a tool to increase recruitment and retention. INC realized the need to offer employees

and prospects more flexibility in their work schedules. They hope to have half their work force teleworking by the completion of this project. The VTP consultants will help them make the most of their connectivity by helping

them establish the most effective connections for their needs, and solve software licensing issues. They will also lay out a strategic plan for rolling out INC's telework program, and help them determine which jobs are best suited to

telework as well as determine how to measure the productivity of teleworkers.

The Roosevelt School District, with 155 employees, wants to provide flexibility for its employees, but also sees telework as a way to be on the cutting edge among education employers. The VTP consultants will help the

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TELEWORK Q & A

Introducing a new feature to e-workwire... In each issue, we will answer questions from our readers about telework. Want to know how to get a program started? Can't decide how to select your teleworkers? Ask us and we'll find answers for you! Send your questions to **telework@bjc.com**, then watch future issues for solutions to your questions.

Q. What is the right number of days per week to telework?

A. With the versatility of telework itself comes flexibility in the number of days that works for the employee and the employer. A good rule of thumb is from one to three days per week on average. For some jobs, such as

sales or telemarketing, a full-time telework schedule might be perfect. It can provide flexibility for the employee and cost savings for the employer.

Q. It seems like teleworking is limited to big companies—is this true?

A. While many Fortune 500 companies are getting attention for their telework programs, smaller companies across the country are often able to adopt innovations more quickly than larger ones. They are often under pressure to cut costs or retain key people and don't have to deal with as much 'red tape' before introducing telework programs.

MANAGING YOUR TELEWORKERS:



Today, the way of managing employees is changing. As telework becomes a more viable option more managers are learning to adjust their management styles. Some are becoming "facilitator" rather than "boss." Some are employing management by objective tactics now more than ever. All are learning the importance of supporting their employees' efforts to achieve a fulfilling balance of work and family life.

So what does it take to effectively manage a teleworker in today's workplace?

Strategy – Put together a plan that includes both long and short term goals. Teleworkers should know what these are and how they fold into their company's objectives. Teleworkers are sometimes left to make independent decisions so their understanding of the company's goals will help them make wiser decisions

A Written Agreement – Between the worker and employer, there should be an agreement to determine how teleworking works for them.

VALLEY TELEWORK PROGRESS

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District establish a program for their exempt and non-exempt employees, define home workplace liability issues, and develop connectivity to the network.

They will also help the District communicate with its work force about the telework program to lessen any negative perceptions that may exist or arise.

At **Mountain Park Health Center**, an employer of 100, they will use the VTP consultants' expertise to comply with trip reduction program requirements and help ease space restrictions. They are also interested in seeing how a telework program affects retention, recruitment, and employee satisfaction. The consultants are helping them get their program up and running as soon as possible by conducting training sessions, determining what positions can telecommute, establishing the correct technology for connectivity, and dealing with legal issues.

Peter Valk, Transportation Management Services, consults with the Mountain Park Health Center steering committee about how to develop a telework program that will help meet their business goals and strategies.

From top left: Sylvia Echave Stock, Jim Meister, Cecilia Hofberger, Peter Valk, Shirley Manning.



Tips to Make Telework Work for You

It should include guidelines on required office communications, ownership and use of equipment, and compensation for worker-provided equipment (i.e. additional phone lines, long-distance phone charges etc.).

Incoming Calls – To make the work experience seamless to incoming callers industry experts suggest routing all calls through the central office, or use call forwarding on direct lines.

A Forum – Establish a bulletin board on the company intranet site, to provide easy access to information the remote worker needs to do his or her job.

Continuity and Structure – Schedule regular short meetings with teleworkers to assess goals and achievements and to keep your teleworkers up-to-date.

The Right People – Telework isn't for everyone. Choose employees who are proven self-starters, can work independently, and get work done on time.

Co-Worker Understanding – Managers should make it clear to those working in the office that the teleworker remains an important part of the team.

Results-Based Management – Learn to focus on your employees' performance rather than their procedures. Measure success by quality of work and timely completion of projects. Managers should define tasks as much as possible in terms of output. Then they need to articulate measurable results and milestones to ensure optimum remote supervision. As you employ managing by objectives you not only demonstrate your trust in the teleworker, but also advance your own management skills.

Training – Proper training is essential for both teleworkers and their managers. RPTA offers training classes aimed at helping organizations implement or expand telework programs. Management briefings are also available. To schedule call 602-262-RIDE (7433).

Recruitment & retention problems eased with telework

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turnover rate. Medtronic employees stay with the organization an unprecedented average of eight years.

Costs of hiring and training new people far outweigh the costs of keeping employees happy. That happiness may come in the form of a raise, a larger office, or more balance between work and personal time. Employers are finding that telework is an aggressive recruitment strategy that answers this need.

WorldatWork, the international organization for human resource professionals, says it is the work experience that makes a person stay or leave their current position, and the work experience is unique to any given company.

"Anyone can match salary and benefits, but it's the organiza-

tional culture, values and overall work experience that makes a person choose one situation over another," said Anne Ruddy, Executive Director of WorldatWork.

Ruddy said that allowing a person to telework shows a level of trust, which strongly contributes to how that employee feels about the way he or she is valued by the company.

In today's job market, companies are required to constantly revisit the steps they need to take to retain valuable employees. Employees are looking for a balance between work and personal life. Telework is one tool that many companies are finding works to stay competitive and keep valued employees as well as lure new ones.

Telework can help reduce turnover costs

Did you know that implementing a telework program can actually save you money?

- ◆ Employers can save 63% of the cost of absenteeism per teleworker, or an estimated \$3,500 per year for each teleworker making \$40,000.
- ◆ Retention of teleworkers leads to a cost avoidance of \$13,333 per teleworker making \$40,000 per year. This is assuming organizations spend roughly one-third of an employee's annual salary to replace that person.
- ◆ Teleworkers average a 22% increase in productivity, mostly due to fewer distractions.

Source: International Telework Association/ Joanne H. Pratt Associates, 1999



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